









# ENOUGH TIME TO REACH YOU

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The Collected Stories of Colette Berry, Samantha Allen,  
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# Mi Aventura Española

Nate Osborn

I woke up and got out of my hard, scratchy makeshift bed. As I got up I wondered how long I would be here before I could go home. *'I will just hang out with Diego again today. This is the only thing fun to do in this awful time I am stuck in,'* I quickly put on the itchy smelly rags which I'm wearing for clothes, and head out for Diego's house. As I was strolling at my leisurely pace inhaling the disgusting smell of horse poop, I noticed Fernando was exchanging words with some of the biggest guys I have ever seen. I mistook them for the buildings from my time. *'Man I want to go home,'* I thought to myself. *'Those guys were huge they could kill me with one punch,'* I realized I was just standing there, in the busy street packed with people and horses staring looking stupid, so I kept moving.

I rounded the corner to Diego's house and once I got there I said 'hello' to his mother, Ana.

"Diego will be out in a minute." Diego and I started walking to the muddy dirty, but somehow peaceful riverbank. Diego was talking about how he wished he didn't live in a place like this where he had to hide his Jewish heritage. Right after I threw a five skipper, I realized we had been here for a while, and I was getting hungry. I didn't have breakfast because I wasn't sure how to get money in this time. I have just been living off scraps up until this point. I had been here for about six months *I think*. I feel bad because I can't tell Diego my story. It will break his heart knowing that I will leave one day. It's felt like so long ago since I'd been laying in my bed working on homework and then I started to get dizzy and nauseous and just appeared here at this cold, damp river.

Once I snapped back into reality, Diego was getting mad because apparently he had asked me three times if I was ready to go get something to eat at *el Mercado*. We started off at a shambling speed, headed to our favorite market to get some of our favorite bread. Once we reached the shops we headed into the smelly dirty market *'I wish people bathed here,'* I thought to myself; but I didn't care. Standing at the entrance were those two ginormous guys and of course Fernando standing close by, they were probably here to find more people to put in that awful church. I could tell Diego looked a little alarmed because several Jewish people in his

neighborhood have gone missing, expected to be held in the church. He tried to keep a calm face, but he had beads of sweat dripping down his cheek and his fists were in balls. We continued into the market towards the bakery place, we got our loaf, but Diego just looked at his. I thought he was going to be sick. Right at that moment Fernando and the those two huge guys burst into the room. They looked as if they were searching for someone. I could almost see the butterflies in Diego's stomach as they marched toward him. They grabbed him by the collar of his shirt, and ripped it clean off with ease.

"What religion do you identify as?!"

"Christian" weakly Diego said. I could tell they didn't believe him, so they asked him to recite a few lines from the Bible. Luckily I had been making Diego practice these lines and I must say he was getting good. I wasn't worried at all, but once he opened his mouth nothing came out. It was as if he couldn't speak. This was the worst time possible he could have lost his voice. The two huge ugly men glanced at each other and gave him one punch right in this mouth, then they picked him up and tied his hands behind his back, asked him to read again. But once again he couldn't do it. Then they led him outside.

I stood there for a moment completely dazed, once I regained my senses I headed after them. I got outside the market door and saw their wagon just up the road. They had Diego's arms tied to the wagon, I didn't have to follow the cart to know where they were headed. '*The Church*,' I thought to myself. I have to go tell Diego's mom. I took off at an incredible pace trying my best to dodge all the horse poop, and soon enough I made it to Diego's house. I burst through the door and saw Ana sitting at the table crying. I'm guessing she had already heard the news. I sat down next to her and told her

"I'm going to get him back; no matter the cost," she looked up at me.

"I can't ask you to do that."

"But, Ana," I said, "He is my best friend I would do anything for him." She reluctantly allowed me to go.

As I left she yelled

"Please just be careful!" As I strolled out of the house I took one last look around and said to myself '*I am going to get my best friend back home.*' I walked outside, took a deep breath

and bolted, heading straight for the church. I reached the church in about five minutes. I had sprinted the whole way, and I was hunched over panting, gasping for air. I glanced over at the massive double doors that led into that sinister place. I have heard so many awful stories about this place, It was where all the torture was done so many people have died here. As I started walking towards those doors I could feel the gargoyles attached to the building staring deep into my soul. It took most my strength to get the doors open as they were heavy, but I got it done.

Once I stepped inside I saw Fernando talking to some cardinals about how he acquired some more people to convert. I was too busy trying to listen that I didn't see the shelf that I was about to walk into, but it was too late. It made a loud noise when some books fell off, but just in time I dove behind a row of pews.

I heard Fernando say

“It must be the wind.” Once he finished exchanging words with his bosses, he headed off to the basement. I could hear the screams seeping through the floorboards of all the victims being tortured and forced to convert to Christianity. I sneaked up row by row trying to get to the front of the church. Once I finally reached the door I slowly and quietly tried to open it. Surprisingly it wasn't locked, but it made an awful creaking sound when it opened. I stepped down the stairs carefully trying not to make the weak floorboards creak. I made it to the bottom and took cover, behind a barrel in the dark smelly basement while I decided what my next move would be. I slowly moved throughout the dark, cold, damp, torch lit hallway trying to find where they were keeping Diego. I went down the hall room by room checking to see if he was in there. I had to occasionally dive behind barrels, hiding from workers patrolling the halls. Eventually I found the right room and I carefully opened the door. I whispered to my blindfolded friend,

“Diego, I'm here.” He responded with

“You shouldn't have come. I'm already dead,” then he pointed to his side which had a large gash, in it that will definitely get infected. I stared at his wound for a second. It looked bad, but I couldn't think about it we had to get out of here. We would get through this. I started untying the ropes tied around his arms and legs. They were tough, but I was getting it done as soon as I got them untied Diego fell to the floor gasping from getting the wind knocked out of him.

“Come on we have to get out here! Fernando will be coming soon,” I told him. He got up staggered towards the door and opened it slowly. As headed for the stairs, I urged him to move faster because we needed to get of here before they noticed he was gone. It took us a while to get up the stairs. We had to stop for Diego to catch his breath and take the weight off his leg. They had definitely been cutting him I thought to myself We started moving again but Diego was on my back this time. When we made it to the top and open the door Fernando was standing 20 feet away reading something in a desk drawer in his office. We decided to make a run for the door, he noticed us and was moving much faster than us even with Diego off my back. We were close to the door, and he was closing in on us. I could feel his hand about to grab me when I threw a book shelf resting against a pillar on top of Fernando and bought us some time.

We made it outside and there sat a stack of old corn sacks. I picked one down, layed Diego on it and proceeded to pull him behind me.

“Go to the house! I need to grab something, quick!” Diego shouted at me. I told him

“There is no time. We have to get out of town for a while.” He responded with

“Trust me this will be worth it.” As I was sprinting down the road, I took a sharp left turn, almost dumping Diego out of the wagon. We stopped in front of his house, and I helped him up. We made it to the door his mom let us in, and told us

“We shouldn’t be here” and that “we have to go,” but Diego kept moving to his room. He came back a minute later with a dagger, and his mother, Ana, asked “Diego where did you get that?”

“I have been saving it for this exact moment,” Diego replied. We went outside and headed to the only safe place I knew; the river bank. I felt him closing in on us we had to leave now. Fernando would be right on our tail. We reached the river bank and jumped down the wall just as Fernando rounded the corner, but he didn’t see us. Diego grunted in pain. I almost forgot about his wound.

“It will be okay. We just have to wait it out and keep the wound clean.” We had been sitting here for a couple hours and I thought it would be safe for us to go back to Diego’s house. We sauntered back at a slow pace, once we reached the house we stepped inside and saw Ana tied up inside. Diego screamed,

“MOM!” at that exact moment someone grabbed me from behind. I felt a cold blade go against my throat. I felt scared and started to struggle but it was no use. I heard a raspy, cold, evil voice say,

“you thought you could steal my prisoners and get away with it.” Right when he finished talking I started to get dizzy and I only managed to get a few words out to my best friend.

“Thank you, Diego, be safe.” Then before I knew it I was in my house laying on the floor in my room and Winston was licking my face. I looked at my phone and saw it was the same day five minutes later. I had been laying here for a few minutes when I felt I was in the 1500s Spain for six months. I ran down stairs and everything was the same, my Dad was watching TV and my dad’s girlfriend Allison was making cookies. I went back up stairs and felt a deep sadness after the death of my best friend.

It didn’t matter. I was happy to be home, but still I felt bad for Diego. He probably died a horrible death in that awful basement. *‘I am a failure for not saving him’* I thought to myself. I regained my focus and Winston would not stop smelling me. I must have smelled terrible, so I jumped in the shower and took a warm shower. It felt good. Once I got out I went into my room and I laid down. Winston curled up next to me and I instantly fell asleep.

# Escapism

Samantha Allen

With the piercing pains of 1937 still fresh in my mind, I sauntered over to my bed, for I was sore and tired. The room was dark and hard to see in, but I hadn't the energy nor need to turn on the lights. When I collapsed on the soft mattress, I tried to recall what happened. The city, the railway, and Wang. All were lost in the bomb. As far as I knew, Ping was still there. Still stuck in the railway, or what was left of it. My heart clenched, and my stomach swirled. I shot up and fell over my cold, metal wastebasket. I grabbed it and emptied out my breakfast. It was certainly better going down than up. I sighed and wiped my mouth with my black sweater sleeve. I squinted through the darkness. The glaring blue light from my phone cut through the dark atmosphere. According to the phone, it was October 26, 2021. I was home again. On the same day, even though it had been about two days since I left. Two days for me in my reality and 5 minutes in this reality. But was I sure my reality was correct? Was I just imagining things? If that was the case, my hallucinations were becoming lucid. And painful.

Hallucination or not, if I was to be sent back again, I would need to be much more prepared. My old box bag suited my needs, big enough to carry as much as I needed. I filled the bag with band-aids, pre-packed food, a compass, and money. I ransacked my bedside drawer for money and stumbled across a stack of old yuan, and a few dollars. I counted twenty dollars and pondered if I needed more. I tiptoed around the rest of the house and checked for any signs of life. The house seemed empty, so I took a breath and headed for the jar that sat dusting in the corner of my living room. In it, money went unused and saved for years, to be used at a later date. I thought that the right time to use the savings was there and then. As I feared for my life, I felt as if the money should indeed go towards the subject of my future. But should be used now instead of later. A tear rolled from my cheek at the prospect of not being able to come back to this home, to my home.

Surprised by my sudden delve into emotion, I wiped the tear from my face. There was no need to get emotional. I vigorously shook the money from the jar, not only trying to shake the currency but also the then wavering feeling of dread. The money drifted to the floor and fell into straying piles. As time has taught me, the best way to keep the mind busy is to keep the hands

busy. I took each dollar, each bit of weathered paper, and stacked them in order of their value. Ones on ones, fives on fives, twenties on twenties, and even, to my wonder, twos on twos. I wrapped them in bits of cut paper and stacked them, one to twenty.

Also, I would need a disguise. I don't think people wore Supreme sweaters in the 1900s. I laughed at the thought after it crossed my mind. I raided my closet and settled on a simple bias-cut dress and some Oxford style shoes I had worn on Halloween a few years back. I clutched the shoes and traced the perforated details, searching for comfort in the many details on the lace. As I held the clothes in my hands, I wondered if I would ever see another Halloween. I placed the clothes in the bag, stretched, wiped the bags from my eyes, and smiled at the fact that what I would miss the most was the candy.

I walked around my home trying to drink in the details of my house. Stroking every crack in the wall and every crevice. I made my way to the sun room and approached the large wooden table that stretched across one half of the room. I scanned the room and let my eyes rest on a painting. Gifted to my father by his father-in-law. I looked at the soldier who then stared unblinkingly back at me. My eyes traced down to the gun he was holding, a rifle, old. Used in the era of the civil war. I focused on the rifle and thoughts of danger ran rampant in my mind, leading me to wonder what I would do if I found myself in a situation that would warrant using self-defense. I pulled a box out from under my bed. In it was a small handgun, a decorated 380 apc. I stuffed it in my bag and silently thanked my brother for this early birthday present. The subject of weaponry had always fascinated my brother. He decked his room with posters and models. Even Nerf guns drew his attention. I peeked into his ornament riddled bedroom and found his old camping bag. I went through the pack and grabbed his Swedish Fire Knife. I stared at it for a while, thinking of the prospect of having to draw someone's blood. A wave of dizziness snapped me out of my thoughts.

I readied the bag on my shoulder and prepared to depart. Although, one cannot simply 'be prepared' for the predicament I was in. And of all the times and places to be sent back to, it just had to be China during the worst war in recorded history.

"What have you gotten yourself into?" I sighed to myself.



A sudden surge of nausea made me double over. The floor shifted and transformed. My soft carpeted flooring became hardwood beneath my feet. As I fell, I gripped my bag tighter and tighter. I knelt and tried to steady myself against a wall. The wall melted away and was replaced by flowery, yellow wallpaper. My feet settled on the ground, and when the world stopped spinning, I gave myself the time to recognize my surroundings.

The tacky wallpaper surrounded something that resembled a bathroom. A hole in the ground sufficed for what I thought was a toilet. A sink stood in the corner of the small space. My nausea was seceding. No nausea meant I wouldn't have to use that hole in the floor any time soon. I didn't recognize the space as a place I had been before and I stood confused for a moment.

"Aye, get out already," an impatiently toned voice sent me back to reality, "Some of us gotta use the hopper!"

I stepped outside and let the man use the... "Hopper". The bathroom was in the back of some sort of train. Steam locomotive, likely. As I looked out upon the people that occupied this train, it became increasingly clear I was not in 'Kansas' anymore. The passengers on the train were dressed in all sorts of garments, from high waisted navy blue sailor pants to cream colored bias cut dresses like mine. As I slowly made my way to an empty seat, I scanned the passengers for a newspaper or some sort of indicator as to where or when I was. The best idea I had was that I was somewhere in the 1930s. My knowledge and perception of time is still not good and it certainly wasn't then. I found an unoccupied seat in front of a young couple.

I disregarded their stares. I knew I would get strange looks, what with my heritage. A person of Asian-African descent was uncommon on these types of trains for the rich or, at least, economically comfortable. The woman coughed and the man clutched her closer. As I focused my gaze on the couple, I found a certain recognition with the young lady. She had a close resemblance to a certain woman that I knew. She looked like Wang. My eyes teared slightly at the thought of her and Ping. I must have stared for too long, though, because she quickly looked downwards.

My eyes moved to the man, who looked nervous. He was staring out of the window, his lips formed a tight line. He gulped. His thick-rimmed glasses almost hid his sideways glance

back at me. Almost. My eyes combed over his finely ironed and plaid suit and I scanned over his arm still around the woman. Now that I've had a good look at her, the woman looked a little sick. Green, gold, and purple lilacs danced across her strikingly red ao dai. Her hair was pinned in a tight bun with a golden clip in the shape of a small vine.

"Excuse me," I asked, "What today's date?"

The man answered in her stead, "Monday, September 6th".

"What's the year?" I specified. The woman looked at me with confusion. The man turned his stare towards me.

"1937...", the man analyzed me as he answered. Still suspicious, he turned his gaze back to the window. The woman kept her eyes locked on me.

The train stopped in a station. The Shanghai Station. I needn't ask further, I was back where it ended last time. I was in China, during WW2.

I saw the man and woman exit, and I decided to follow them. As they were exiting, a train attendant collected their tickets at the front. As I recall, I had no ticket. That could land me in much more trouble than what I was prepared to handle. I quickly turned and headed for the back of the train. Unfortunately, a train attendant was coming from the back as well. I remembered reading somewhere that train attendants had the same authority as policemen when needed. It wasn't something that I wanted to confirm. I made my way to the bathroom, stepped in, and locked the door. I needed to think. I needed time; time I didn't have.

"Ma'am?" the attendant knocked on the door, "ma'am we're collecting tickets now. Are you alright?"

I dared not answer. I couldn't hear what she was saying, but she was discussing something with a man.

"Hey, lady you've gotta leave," he said, "Lady? 女士. 你得离开,"

They spoke gibberish to me, partly because of the language barrier, but mainly because of my own panic. I frantically looked for a way out. There were no windows. I'd need to stagger the two attendants and make my way outside. I calmed myself and prepared to punch someone. I opened the door slowly at first.

The first attendant moved out of the way, "Thank you, ma'am. Now, where is your ticket?  
女士, 你会说普通话吗?"

I slammed the door into the face of the attendant who hadn't moved and punched the other before she had a chance to react. I could feel my knuckles connect with her nose. It hurt but the pain barely registered over the adrenaline that rushed through my bloodstream. I ran past the last few passengers. I scanned the car for a way out. I slid into an aisle and tried to pry the window open. The first attendant was already steadying herself. I reached in my bag and pulled out my gun. I didn't want to waste any bullets, I'd need them later. I used the butt of the gun to smash the window. When it finally broke, I climbed out of the train and ran. I didn't look back to see if they were chasing me, I just ran. The blurred images of the roadside buildings barely fazed me as I passed. Things, places, and people were constantly coming into and fading out of sight. I made it about six blocks down when I realized that I had no clue where I was going. I turned a corner and sat against a wall. I leaned my head back and tried to think. Why was this happening to me? When could I go home? How would I get home? I felt scared and confused. As far as I knew, there was no way back. It was like some horrible Netflix adaptation anime plot. I shuddered at the thought. I didn't cry, though. There was no time to sit there and cry. I needed a place to stay, a home base.

Yelling in the distance brought me back out of my thoughts. I may have just heard it briefly, but I recognized this voice. The man from the train was in some sort of argument. I poked my head around the corner to find the source of this racket originating from an almost abandoned alleyway. In it were the man and woman from the train. The man had his back to me and the woman was looking down. I crept closer to better hear what they were saying.

"I appreciate your attempts to get me home. And you've been helpful and kind to me in these past days. I just," the woman looked askance and struggled to get her words out, "I just feel like this won't work. I don't think I'll be... happy with you," The man looked furious, he sounded furious,

"I've spent a lot of money to get you here, just like you asked, and now you're just gonna toss me away. I don't think so. I'm getting what I deserve."

The man grabbed her arm and looked at her with ill intent. Whatever was going to happen here, I wouldn't let it. I snuck up to the dysfunctional couple, gun in hand. The woman looked up to face the man and saw me creeping up to them. I put a finger to my mouth to keep her silent.

"You belong to me," he said, his egotistical mindset was becoming progressively apparent, "I won't take no as an answer."

I hit him square in the head with the butt of the gun. He fell to the ground. Not entirely unconscious, he looked up at me.

"Y-you... what?" he managed to spout before I hit him again. The woman looked terrified. I turned to her, and she flinched in response to my sudden movement.

"Is it the in-laws?" she didn't seem to appreciate my joke.

I confirmed that she wasn't injured, and proceeded to struggle with leaning the man up against the wall. *How many dumplings has this man eaten?* I thought as I finally managed to prop him up without him or I falling over.

"I guess you could say this is a heavy situation," my attempts at breaking the ice were failing. I could see visible pain in her eyes as she proceeded to wince at my pun.

After I explained that I wasn't going to harm her, I offered to escort her home. It might've been a coincidence, but she probably had some relation to Wang. And even if I was wrong, it would be beneficial to have connections that I could rely on. And I would have a place to sleep if this went well.

Now that I had time to think, I noticed she spoke fluent English. Which may have been normal, but she definitely looked like she was born Chinese. To either confirm or deny my suspicions, I asked her a few questions.

"My name is Li Zheng," she replied. She asked questions about my heritage and I asked questions about her fluent speech.

"You speak English better than some of my friends," she grinned at my remark. I turned my attention back to my first concerns. I asked her if she knew Wang. It was becoming a greater and greater possibility that she was related to Wang. Namely, because Wang's maiden name was Zheng.

"She was my sister," Li drew her attention to a stubborn patch of grass sprouting between the cracks in the concrete. *Was*. I regrettably used to my advantage. I told her I was here to pay my respects. She seemed to doubt this, but continued to lead on anyways.

A large house rose over the horizon. Red and gold, the colors of luck and fortune, gave the house an almost palace like design. A golden gate separated the property from the street. An older man stood at the gate, guarding the entrance. His uniform was dominantly black with a red and gold trim, he matched the persona of the house as if he were merely a doll. His demeanor seemed to discourage passengers from approaching the household. His gaze resembled a glare, but the rest of his face gave off a sort of calm. As Li approached, the man smiled and gave a slight nod in her direction. He turned and gave the gate a hard shove. The large gate seemed to fold in at its hinges from the pressure. We walked the long distance through the house's yard in silence. A young woman greeted us at the front door and attempted to take our bags. I refused to give my bag and gripped the strap tighter. The last thing I wanted to do was get separated from my bag. My only tether to the real world was this bag and the items inside. Li whispered something to the maid. In response, the maid bowed, then beckoned us to follow her. Li turned to me,

"You knew Wang. My mother will want to meet you," she led me after the maid and suddenly we were outside again. A gondola sat in the midst of a sea of flowers. These people were swimming in money, whether helpful to me is up for debate. In the gondola, a woman sat sipping tea like someone from an old drama. Her hair was obviously dyed to hide her greys and was pulled in a tight bun. Li dismissed the maid and made a slight bow to the woman.

"Li," the woman remarked with a look of distaste, "who is this?"

Li explained to the woman, who I guessed was her mother, who I was and that I had known Wang. I filled in the spots that I hadn't told Li. I told her of the Shanghai South Railway and a trip to Shanghai with her daughter, Wang Zheng, and her granddaughter, Ping Shen. I gave her the description of a young woman with eyes as black as the night sky, and a baby with eyes just as dark. I explained how the planes screamed across the sky and dropped hell from their cargo holds. I described the sight of Wang being crushed by the weight of heavy shrapnel and the photographer, that instead of helping us, decided to take a photo of the crying baby that Wang

was going to leave behind. I recited the last words of Wang, spoken as I winked in and out of consciousness. Spoken as her soul was 'guided towards the golden city'.

"Save her, and save yourself," I recited. And I assured her that her granddaughter was safe, carried away from the scene in the arms of a trusted companion. Li shed a tear and wiped her eye with a handkerchief. Her mother, although, showed no such emotion. She simply looked me over and asked,

"Are you American?" I explained who I was and my plan to pay my respects. She sighed, "Li, she can't stay here. No matter who she was to Wang. It's dangerous for us and for her,"

I saw an opportunity.

"Ma'am, I come with a proposition," the woman rolled her eyes, it seemed she had heard this from many others, "I can get you out of the country, I can take you back to America with me. I don't need any pay."

"Nobody does anything without wanting to be rewarded. No one does anything just out of the kindness of their heart." She stood, "My family is comfortable here. We will rely on the republic to protect us. My husband may not trust them, but they have gotten us thus far. And I have heard about what you do to our people in America. That is not the life I want for my children,"

Little did she realize the republic rule would be a horrible time in history for her. And little did she know that after the battle of Shanghai, which would end months from now, this province would be under Japanese control. As her mother began to walk away, Li stood and said something in Chinese. The only word I recognized was 'quickly' and 'thank you'. Those few words were all I needed to hear to name the dialect as Mandarin. After hearing my mother speak in Mandarin to her family so many times, bits of the language were burned into my brain. Unfortunately, that didn't mean I could speak it. Her mother narrowed her eyes and spat something back. Li looked downwards, seemingly defeated. Her mother walked away, two maids trailing after her. We sat in silence for a while. I didn't know what I was thinking at the time, but I was focused on how I would get out of here with no support from one of my only connections here.

"I'll go with you," Li spoke, "I'll go to America with you. It's better than staying here, in this dying country,"

"You trust me?" I was skeptical. We had just met a few hours ago. She was as trusting as her sister, "Well, I have some connections that I can find. You'll have to pack quickly, it's s we leave as soon as possible,"

She met me outside after she had said goodbye to her family. She'd better make it count, today was a dangerous day. I led her to the bar I visited my last time here. Once inside, I knew exactly which table to sit at. I sat and waited. A man stepped out from the back, two people trailing behind him. A cigarette was propped in his mouth. He looked over the room and his eyes set on my table. I set my box bag on the table and stared at him. He smiled and walked over.

He sat and, hesitantly, his followers sat as well,

"Sam, I thought you'd be gone longer, considering your certain... predicament. You disappear for nearly a week and appear suddenly with....," he nodded towards Li.

"Li Zheng," I answered for Li, "You probably know why I'm here, Smith."

Smith was the sketchy American who planned to get me out of China with the Chinese railways. After I apparated into his bar right in front of his eyes, he thought I was some sort of demon. Needless to say, he was frightened of me. That gave me some advantage over him, so that I could get him to help me escape China. His plan was to ship me out with fake passports and a bit of money. Unfortunately for me, the Japanese planned to bomb the railway on the same day. I don't think that he's so afraid of me now.

"Today?" He asked. I nodded in response, "Damn, I had a delivery here from Luodianzhen," he chuckled. "We'll have to get to Baoshan, and they're in the middle of a war zone up there," he paused to blow smoke into the air. "Same price y'know. I'm not giving a discount for my survival,"

I opened my pack and pulled out my gun. Hopefully he was still afraid, I could maybe get him to let us out for free.

"You know," he slid around the table and placed a hand on the gun that I had brought out, "I used to think you were some messenger of God. Someone who was sent down to finally put a stop to this bloody war. But now," he took the small acm and pointed it at a dart board, "I just

think you're someone in a tough situation. Just," he cocked the gun, "like," he pulled the trigger and sighed eyed Li as she flinched "us,". We all watched in perpetual awe as a foam bullet fell to the hardwood flooring.

"Welp, guess I'll die," I shrugged.

*Heccing shiz nuggets.* I sighed and took a stack of yuan and a stack of U.S. dollars from my bag. *Of course, it was a Nerf gun, what type of messed up kid would get an actual gun.* I thought. *I've underestimated the intellectual powers of my younger brother.* He looked over them and looked back at me. I should've known it wouldn't be enough money for him. I pulled off of my wrist, a old watch that would not be in style until December. A sly grin slipped onto his lips and handed the 'gun' back to me, "Now we're in business,"

Li looked nervous and I attempted to comfort her by explaining that I had worked with him before, but she still looked uncomfortable. I guess that would be for good reason though. My last venture with Smith had ended with two wounded, one dead, and a railway bombed into oblivion. I began to feel a sense of dread in the pit of my stomach. I pulled the fire knife, with its sheath still on, out of my bag and placed it in my pocket. One could never be too careful. Smith explained the situation in Baoshan to make sure that we got out our doubts before we began our trek through Shanghai. I refused to take the train again and Smith shrugged, stating that after what happened last time he didn't blame me. He pulled out a map, asked for a compass and I, being the paranoid person that I am, could provide one.

"The five of us should fit into my Auburn," Smith saw my questioning look and explained. "The two in the bar. I ain't leaving them to this place."

The man from the bar drove out an old car, although I was probably the only one who thought it was old. I assume the Auburn he spoke of was the model of car.

"I know this isn't the luxury you're used to where you're from, Sam. But it'll have to do with our limitations," Smith said. Li looked amazed at the sight of the old car and once inside was speechless. I was squished into the back with her and the other woman, who looked exasperated at my attempt to fit us all in here with my large bag. Before departing, Smith decided to introduce everyone. A waste of time I was sure, but I didn't want to go against the



man who promised to safely guide us across a war zone. He introduced the woman as Lan Fan, the man as Joseph, and myself as Samantha.

Night fell fast and I fell fast asleep. I was shaken awake to find the car pulled over and a gun in Lan's face. Smith and Joseph were outside of the car with two other people. I panicked, thinking that we had been caught by Japanese soldiers. But these men were not Japanese. They weren't Asian either, they were American. The man with the gun motioned to me to give him the box bag I was clutching. I hesitated and then slowly gave him the bag through the car's window. The large bag made for an awkward exchange and I used it to my advantage. I jammed the bag into the window frame, leaving ample space for a gun to shoot through. Bullets shot through the bag and Li screamed. Simultaneously, I used my elbow to push Lan's head downwards to avoid her being injured and drew the knife. I glanced outside through the corner of my eye and saw Joseph and Smith had used the opportunity to disarm the two men in front. The man next to the door was steadying himself and preparing to shoot again. I opened the door into his knees before he could cock the gun. He stumbled over and before he had the chance to do much of anything I kicked him in the nose. I picked up his gun and knife in hand, I placed the blade near his throat.

Lan climbed out of the car and took the knife from me. A wave of relief passed over me, I was definitely not ready to kill someone, much less hold their lives hostage. Li was still sitting, speechless, in the car. I grabbed my bag, checking the contents. The bag was riddled with holes and my tin of band aids had a hole in its center. Besides that, the contents were mainly untouched. Thank God it didn't hit my Cup Noodles or my canned beans. I silently prayed my saviors, Paulucci and Momofuku, for delivering my food safely through my journey. I walked over to Joseph and Smith and gave Smith the gun. I didn't want to hold it anymore. Smith explained that these were pirates, people who used the chaos of war to their advantage. They had a car as well and Smith gave me the task of clearing it of supplies. I tried to explain that my bag had all the items that we needed, but he didn't care.

"The more the merrier," he shrugged as I frowned at him.

The car was a four-seater, a Ford. Perhaps it was stolen, perhaps it was bought with stolen money. The back windows were covered in a sort of screen, likely used to act as a window tint. I opened the door with unnecessary vigor, only to find a gun pointed, shakily, at my nose. A

child was sweating bullets and looked ready to shoot them, too. I backed away slowly. A child is much more dangerous to handle with a weapon, especially if that weapon is a gun.

"Easy now," at this time I was sweating bullets, "I'm not going to hurt you. Just put down the weapon," I beckoned to him to put the gun down, but with my sudden movement, he only raised it higher. I saw his eyes move away from me and towards his restrained companions. His eyes widened, realizing the predicament he was in, and he decided to do something stupid. He lowered his gun and I relaxed, but he wasn't lowering his gun to decide against shooting me. A shot rang through the air and Li screamed again. The shot was followed by my leg giving out and a yell from my compadres. Smith ran over preparing to shoot the kid. I yelled at him to leave the child alone as my consciousness faded.

"Well," I shrugged to Smith, "guess I'll die," had to get one last joke in before I left. *Damn, I should say something else. I've already used that joke before.* "Wait, this ain't-,"

The world started to spin and soon I was speaking to only a blurred figure. The dirt road beneath my feet became soft and tan. Carpet sprouted one by one and a bed formed where the car once stood.

*"-it," darn just missed it.*

Red stained my left leg and ruined my dress. I groaned and let my nauseousness fade. I sluggishly pulled myself to a rag and wrapped it around my leg. I saw the box bag spilled over back where I apparated, and scanned for all my supplies. Joshua would be pissed about the missing knife, but he would probably assume someone robbed the house. What with the mess and missing money. The tin of band-aids had a gaping hole where the face of the spokesperson should've been. I laughed at the thought of Taylor Swift's famous words, "Band-aids can't fix bullet holes." I mentally recited my "Getting Shot" instructions, learned from watching so many action movies. As for how reliable those methods would be, I might have to just wait and see. Apply pressure, breathe, apply pressure, breathe. I pulled myself to my phone and called 911. It would be hard to explain my bullet wound and my outfit, but I needed immediate medical attention. I took in a sharp breath and listened to the dial tone. I glanced at the trail of blood I would have to clean as best as I could. But even with the pain, a single thought rang through my

head. I did it. It may have been just barely, but I survived my second turn back. I really hoped I wouldn't be sent in the middle of my procedure.

# The Scars of Salem

Kenan Pickering

I stumble over my feet, tripping forward. The ground under my feet was soft dirt, different than the rough carpet on which I had previously been standing. I look up, my eyes scanning the new landscape that has somehow appeared. Around me, people are walking by in clothes resembling images of pilgrims I've seen. A horse-drawn buggy passes through the middle of what appears to be a town square. The claps of the horse's feet follow along behind it. Fear has seized my throat, making it difficult to breathe. Panic and fear shoot through my veins. I have no idea where I am, I just know it's not San Diego. I pick myself up off the ground through labored breaths and step back as a woman gives me a strange glance. She turns away, dragging her child by the hand as she does. I walk backwards, my feet dragging through the grass. I just want to get away from this new place.

The grass rubs against my ankles as I make my way towards what appeared to be a small forest. I felt I'd be safe there, away from the people in the square. As soon as I reach the cover of the trees I pause to think about everything that had just happened. I don't know where I am or how I got there. I also wanted to know why those people were dressed the way they were. My head starts spinning from all the action. The afternoon sun starts to fade as my eyes close and I fall to the ground.

My head jerks up at the sound of an ear piercing shriek. I open my eyes to see dark green leaves caught in late afternoon golden daylight. My memories of earlier come flooding back. I'm suddenly aware I'm laying on the forest floor, dirt dusted all over my jeans. I instinctively turn towards the source of the sound. It seems to be coming from the town just beyond the tree line. I hurriedly get up and start to run back to the square. When I reach the edge, I see a large crowd standing around a platform. Standing on the platform are a group of three men and a young woman. Around the woman's neck is a noose suspended by a plank of wood. Below her is a tall wooden box. The events that follow show me just how much danger I'm in.

Two men clasp her hands firmly behind her back while the third addresses the crowd.

“This woman has been accused of witchcraft on several different accounts. She has been married three times, often dwells in taverns and dresses flamboyantly. She is making no attempt to conceal her witchy ways.” He speaks with a slight British accent. The man steps back as the crowd nods with agreement. The woman’s eyes widen and she starts to scream. They are lost in the noise of the townspeople. The box being kicked out from under her is accompanied by a sick snapping sound as her neck breaks and then her body hangs limp. My breath hitches in my throat and I start to gag. A few of the parents snatch up their children and begin to break away. I hide behind a small stand with different types of bread adorning it. My head starts to throb as the world starts spinning and everything goes black as I collapse on the ground.

When I open my eyes again, I am sitting at my desk in my room. I jump up out of my chair and rush to the kitchen, calling for my family as I go. When I get no response, I check the clock and find that no time had passed. I run back to my room and grab a drawstring backpack, filling it with a water bottle, granola bars, a small book of matches and a lightweight sleep sack. I have no idea what just happened, but I do know that if I go back, I want to be prepared.

I barely have enough time to throw on the bag when I am overcome by nausea and am sent back. I appear in the woods on the edge of town and think back to my previous experience here.

Suddenly it dawns on me where I am, or rather when I am. I’m in Salem, Massachusetts, where most of the famous Witch Trials took place in the late 1600s. I don’t know how or why I’m here, but I do know I don’t want to stay. My mind races as I think of all the different possibilities of how I got here. My concentration is broken by a woman walking up to the cart.

“What are you doing back here? And why are you dressed like that?” I look up and see that she is young, maybe in her 30’s. She seems anxious; like she is worried about being seen with me.

“I just got scared. I don’t do well with death.” I lied quickly, hoping she wouldn’t ask any more questions.

“Where are you from? I haven’t seen you here before. Do you have family in town?” The questions catch me off guard. I scramble to come up with a sufficient lie.

“I’m from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That’s where my family lives. But they sent me here to find work. I’m... Anne Pickering.” I finish. The name change sounds strange, but is necessary as Kenan would raise some questions. Her face contorts to form a scowl, then quickly vanishes like she doesn’t have time to get caught up with me. She stares off in thought for a second before turning back to me.

“Nice to meet you. My name is Sarah Miller. If you’re looking for work, I might know where you can find a job.

“Thank you.” I speak hesitantly, as I don’t know if I can trust her. But I have no other options at this point so I take her up on her offer. “What’s the job you have in mind?”

“It’s a position as caretaker of cousins Elizabeth Parris and Abigail Williams. They need more attention since Tituba, their slave, was accused of being the source of their strange fits and started helping the authorities find more witches. She was one of the first three to be accused of witchcraft. The woman who was just hanged was Bridget Bishop. It’s really terrible what’s happening. They’re accusing anyone, even for having a short temper you could be hanged. It’s especially difficult to find someone, with all the witches hiding among us.” We start walking towards the place where I assume the girls live.

When we arrive at the small barn-like home, Sarah knocks on the door and we are greeted by a man who introduces himself as Minister Samuel Parris.

“Hello. This is Anne Pickering. I met her earlier today and I think she would be a great fit as a caretaker to your girls. Her family lives in Philadelphia and she is in need of a job.”

“That’s wonderful to hear. Anne. I need to make sure you’re up for this job. The girls are hard to handle since the fits started. Not to mention the witches lurking among us. They all want to get to them.” His face morphs into an expression of disgust as he leads us back to a bedroom occupied by two twin cots. Sitting on the floor near a small window are two young girls, Elizabeth and Abigail. They glance up at us as we enter, staring at my clothes that I now realize seem really odd in this time period. “Girls, this is Anne. She will hopefully be helping us out for a little while. You will not be rude to her, and listen to her instructions.” He turns toward me. “Do you have any... other clothes? If not, I can find you something more... fitting for work.”

“Yes, thank you.” I reply as he leaves the room along Sarah, leaving me alone with the two girls. “Hi, girls. What do you like to do? It seems like we’re going to be spending some time together, so we should get to know each other.” Neither of them speak. The blonde, Elizabeth, stands up and walks to sit on the edge of her bed. After a moment of silence, she opens her mouth and lets out an unnatural, bloodcurdling scream. Her hands begin to shake as she closes her eyes. Abigail runs toward me, burying her face in my chest, tears running down her face. The minister bursts through the door and rushes towards Elizabeth. From the bedside table between the beds he grabs a washcloth. After dipping it in a glass of water he places it on the girl’s face. She continues screaming, although her hands start to calm down as she relaxes and leans back into the bed.

We are all ushered out of the room and Mr. Parris closes the door behind him, the last to leave. His voice sounds embarrassed, and a little bit angry.

“That is exactly the kind of thing you’ll be dealing with, so you’ll need to know how to do so. Thank you for handling Abigail. When Elizabeth has these fits, she gets easily frightened. The same goes for Elizabeth when Abigail has these episodes. However, hers are more violent. I have discussed with Ms. Miller and we have decided that you will be a good fit for them. Nobody else is willing to do the job, but I think you’ll do nicely. Now, the sun is setting so you must go. I am expecting you to return at 7:00 promptly tomorrow morning. Please take the dresses I have gathered for you and placed by the door. Good day.” I step outside and the door is shut behind me. Not knowing where to go, I re-adjust the dresses in my arms and head back to the woods where I was before. Before I enter the tree line I look around to make sure no one is watching. Being spotted going into the woods at night would not be great during a Witch Hunt In Salem. Out of my bag I pull a the bottle of water and take a few sips. I’m planning on saving the granola bars so they can last me as long as I might need. I lay down on a small bed of leaves I created and pull another dress on top as a blanket. Once I’m comfortable, I close my eyes and hope that tomorrow this will all be gone.

When I wake up to birds chirping, the sun is just barely starting to rise. I have no idea what time it is, so I decide to change into one of the dresses I hung on a tree branch last night to minimize the dirt that touches it. I choose an old smelling, dirty, light yellow dress that just

barely brushes the tops of my feet, hiding most of my out-of-place shoes. The long sleeves end in messy cuffs and the whole thing has an apron that goes over it.

When I arrive at the Minister's house, I let myself in and head to the kitchen. Inside I find a kind looking woman hunched over a pot of boiling water. Beside her on a large wooden table are five places set up, with steaming plates of food set on the table. She turns around just as I reach her to introduce myself and calls out to the girls to come for breakfast. She notices me and introduces herself as the family's cook, Alice. She calls me Anne as she says this, so she must already know who I am. I stand there awkwardly, not knowing what to do until the family arrives for breakfast. The two girls sit across from each other, leaving three seats open for the Minister, Alice and I. I wait to sit down until everyone else is seated, because I'm just the help. We dine on bacon, eggs and biscuits in silence. Once we are finished, the Minister speaks to me.

"Anne, today you will help the girls with their lessons in the morning then you will all have lunch. After that, you will take them for a walk through town to buy some more bread from the baker. After supper they will need a bath and then straight to bed." I nod, taking a mental note to not be late to anything and get it all done.

The next few weeks or so all pass the same. I wake up early, help with breakfast and dine with the family. I assist the girls in getting ready, followed by morning lessons. Next comes lunch, then I take them for a walk to run errands in town. Afterwards is supper, then baths and bed. Each day passes slowly, uneventfully.

As I'm cleaning up from lunch, there is a hard rapping on the door. I answer it to two older looking men holding a piece of paper.

"You've been accused of witchcraft on account of your strange comings and goings into the woods at night. Tomorrow at noon you must be in the courthouse to be tried. Not doing so will result in immediate execution." They walk off, leaving me dumbfounded and confused. I was so careful making sure no one saw me. I have no idea what to do because surely I'll be found guilty anyway. Hastily I shove the paper in my pocket so that no one else see it; even though I'm sure they all already know. The rest of the day continues, my head up in the clouds as I think of all the things that could happen.



As I walk back through town towards the woods, the townspeople I had befriended during my time here turn their heads to stare at me. I could see the rumors flying between them all. I don't head into work in the morning but stay in the woods to contemplate and plan out what I'm going to say in court. I rack my brain for any excuse as to why I live in the woods, but nothing comes to mind. I decide to just go with the truth, or at least part of it: I'm homeless and can't afford housing with the small wages I receive every week.

When 11:30 rolls around I begin my walk into town. I'm wearing my nicest dress, a light blue with a white collar. The town is eerily silent as I make my way to the courthouse. Everyone must already be there, seeing as it's a public trial. When I finally arrive at the courthouse, I pause and take a few deep breaths, trying to go over what I planned to say. Voices quiet when I enter and heads turn. Someone ushers me to a podium in front of the judge's table. The rows of seats are all crowded, and people are leaning against the walls around the perimeter of the room.

Several men walk and sit at the table. One is the judge and the other two are consultants I assume. The judge speaks first, once all whispers have ceased.

"Anne Pickering, you have been accused of witchcraft due to your shifty behavior at work, lack of family and frequent comings and goings into the woods at night. It has also been reported that Abigail and Elizabeth's condition has gotten worse since you arrived in their home." I turned around to look for the Minister, who was definitely the one who said that. I found him in the front row, Betty and Abigail on either side of him. He had an expression of pure hatred on his face. I hastily turned back to the judge, angry. "To prove you are a witch, you will remove your clothes and be examined for a witch's mark. Now"

I sigh and follow his instructions, knowing that any freckle or scar they see will be considered a witch's mark. I'm right. They find a scar on my leg from where I fell into the edge of a concrete stair when I was six or seven years old. I put my clothes back on and am forced onto an empty bench to watch the other women go through their trials. All of us come out with the same verdict, but no in the same way. Some were poked with needles to see if they felt pain. They all did, but were blamed for putting on an act. Others were instructed to recite the Lord's Prayer out loud, and any mistake was taken as a sign of 'witchiness'. By the end, there were five other alleged witches.

The town was whispering the whole time, telling each other about ‘the time they saw one of us shape-shift into a rat or become invisible.’ After the last girl was done, we are told that tomorrow evening we will be hanged publicly. Until then however, we will be staying in a heavily guarded barn because there’s so many of us. The town is dismissed, but continue to lurk outside the doors as we are herded to the barn. Inside are a few empty stables overflowing with hay and mud. The air is still and has an old, musty smell. There are a few old, scrappy blankets in a pile near the big double door entrance. The doors slam behind us once we are all inside and we look around at each other, none of us knowing what to do. I am by far the youngest of them, with Sarah Good the only one under 40. I sit down on a pile of hay, near where the others were sitting. I bury my face in my dress, tears rolling down my cheeks. I don’t know what I’m going to do.

I wake up the next morning with a sharp pain in my neck from sleeping wrong. Sunlight is streaming through the open doors where a man is placing water and bread on a plate in the center of the barn. Only one other woman is awake, Elizabeth Howe. She saw me and came over to sit next to where I was, bringing some food and water with her.

“I overheard the men talking and they said that we will be executed at sundown tonight. Until then we will be kept in here.” Her face falls as she says this, then morphs into anger. “We have no right to be locked in here! We have done nothing wrong. They just need someone to blame for the fits the girls have been having. I’m sorry you have to be a part of this, especially so young, only fifteen.” Her eyes have tears in them as she says this and I can tell she really means it.

For the rest of the day we sit and chat about life in the town. Occasionally someone will go on a rant or burst into tears about our situation. Finally, five o’clock rolls around, which means sunset will come soon after. We are summoned outside, and marched through town into the square where the same platform is set up, this time with six ropes instead of one. The small crowd that has already gathered parts to let us through. Sarah Good struggles and tries to break free from the man holding her arms, but fails. One by one, they secure us in the ropes, standing on the blocks as we await our horrible fate. A man addresses the crowd, the same one from the first hanging. My mind is racing, thinking of ways to escape or postpone my death. Sounds from

the crowd are tuned out and I can only focus on my thoughts. Finally, the blocks is kicked out from under Sarah Goode. As the woman next to me is killed, I start to cry, tears dripping off my chin and onto the crate below me. The rope seems to tighten as I meet my horrible demise. Everything turns to slow motion when he steps in front of me, meets my eyes and pulls his foot back,

Suddenly my head is reeling, my vision clouding over as I fall to the floor. I'm dead. I look around, and am greeted to my living room, just as it was when I left. I stand up and realize I'm not dead, I still have consciousness. I'm home, just before death took me, I made it home to my friends and my family.

The sun is still shining just as it was when I left. The light reflects off of the light blue walls of my bedroom. My hair is pushed back by the soft salty breeze blowing in from the sea. The voices of my family drift back to my room, followed by laughter. I smile, relieved to finally be home. I close my eyes again and collapse onto my bed, exhaustion taking over.

# *White Wash: Changing The Narrative Around Cultural Assimilation*

By Colette Berry

“Various families within the Blackfoot Confederacy banded together because they had things in common, and one of those things is their struggle to survive in the given climate. The relationship that will keep you alive was deemed a reliable one, and Native lives are all about creating a reliable relationship with the natural world.”

Echoing my grandfather through the repetition of his words has become a comfort to me in the months following our last visit. The memories of every trip I have taken to see him have become marked with feelings of deep sentiment and affection, for the priceless lessons he had taught me lasted long after winter break ended. A veteran and scholar, my grandfather acts as a seemingly endless source of inspiration for anyone who had the pleasure of truly knowing him. His insight on Native identity encouraged me to create a dialogue about our past with my other family members, which often resulted in half-finished interviews that left me with more questions than answers. Throughout my life I’ve always thought of my grandparents as figures of authority, the ones who were solely responsible for my interest in life “B.C”, Before Colette. However after my more recent discoveries of narrative poetry and conspiracy theories, for the first time ever my motivation to learn about myself stems from something other than an obligation to my family, genuine curiosity.

*But mainly obligation*, I mumble to myself.

I’ve tried to use my informal research as a way to cope with the “mid-youth crisis” which hit me hard at the age of twelve, and since then I’ve spent the last two years of my life obsessing an unhealthy amount over the cultures of the world and how I fit within them. Whether it’s through art, literature or historical events, spending time researching the power dynamics between indigenous peoples and colonists has given me the opportunity to insert my voice into the unsettlingly vague discussions which have been facilitated in my classrooms. I absentmindedly adjust my earrings as an excuse to let my hands wander further and further away

from the book I was supposed to be reading and inwardly groan at the thought of having to listen to others speculate at how our main antagonist will die.

In my class's chosen novel, *Kindred*, the main character, Dana, is forced to consider under what circumstances women of color are expected to thrive and which ones they will let break them after time-travelling to her family's plantation in the late 1800s. From the first time I read the book I knew in a life-and-death situation such as Dana's I could never exhibit her searing wit and maternal kindness even if I wanted to. Tuning out the book's narrator, I can feel myself becoming less engrossed with Dana's heroism and personal sacrifice and more so with the suspicious marks on the linoleum floor of the classroom and the thick ribbing on the cuffs of my sweater. I gaze at the survival kit I made to mimic Dana's own for a class assignment, and I rummage through it with the goal of finding the protein bar I packed in it this morning. Becoming increasingly frustrated with myself as I tear through my bag, I feel a wave of nausea rush over me. Is it hunger? A period-induced migraine? I'm not quite sure, but the moment I stand up I get knocked over by an immense wave and become dominated by a sense of impending dread.

Upon impact with what seems like water I feel cold, impossibly cold for the climate of Southern California. I open my eyes to inky blackness and see nothing save for an ominous shadow of what seems to be a slender fish. With my dingy so-called 'survival kit' in my left hand I'm finding it difficult to swim against such a strong current. I momentarily struggle for air, and when I finally reach up towards the top of the water I almost instantly feel a hand firmly latch onto my wrist. I recoil, shocked by the sudden contact and almost as soon as I broke the touch between me and the person I noticed another muscular arm slithering around my waist in an attempt to bring me to the river's surface. I gag, struggling to adapt to the frigid air and crumple to the ground, utterly defeated by the sudden turn of events. I keep my eyes clenched shut because I now know that I'm deathly afraid to come to terms with my new location. Especially because I don't know where I am, and who the people were who dragged me out of the water. Tourists? Lifeguards? Fishermen maybe?

*Catch of the day, am I right?*

I sense one of them leaning closer to my face and feel their cold fingers tenderly graze over the slowly emerging bump on my forehead. Whether they are friend or foe is yet to be determined, however as I accommodate to this strangers touch I have a suspicion that it is the former.

My eyes flicker open and I awake to find myself sharing a drafty tent with a woman, dressed in animal hide and an elaborately beaded belt. I'm not at all surprised by the fact my savior was a female, and this new information comforts me immensely. Her striking facial features are reminiscent of my mother's, from the curvature of her nose to her high cheekbones I can see the resemblance almost immediately. As I piece together the bitter cold, the distinctive shapes of the leaves which are littering the ground beside me and the red paint which decorates the forehead of the lady in front of me it is becoming increasingly apparent from where I am standing. My Canadian ancestry was the butt of many jokes throughout my life, however, some of my fondest memories include childhood trips to Washington D.C. so I could celebrate Canada Day and hearing my grandparents' stories about their extensive travels throughout the North. I might talk more about my Puerto Rican side when asked about my background but make no mistake, I f\*\*king love Canada.

Being here now is insane, and I notice myself struggling mentally in a futile attempt to rationalize my location through conventional science. My mind instantaneously wanders back to the novel *Kindred* and how Dana defies time and space by traveling over 3,000 miles to come to the aid of her dead ancestor.

*Just like what's happening to me right now.*

I watch her eyes shift back and forth with discomfort upon seeing me on my feet for the first time, I look down at my tennis shoes and my newly "distressed" jeans and begin to feel ridiculous. Her lips are moving frantically, wordlessly and I feel my heart drop in my chest. She's afraid of me. She may be my ancestor, but as she looks me in the eyes for the first time it suddenly becomes very apparent to her and to myself that I really don't belong here. For the first time since the river I feel terrified, my heart is beating loud in my chest and I edge backwards, creeping towards the wall of the tent. She stays silent, inching closer and closer until I feel her

firmly cover my mouth with her hand. She begins to speak, and what she says only validates my feelings of aggression and fear.

“Go back to where you came from.”

I realize instantaneously that she’s not only talking about me, but light-skinned people like me as well. I break free from her grip, and I run away, fast. With nothing to guide me but the setting sun and a forest of colossal cedar trees, I move further and further away from the village with the hopes of avoiding the inhabitants pervasive gazes. I feel nothing but shame, and in the midst of my adrenaline rush I remember the unsettlingly vague description of Imperialism which I was taught in seventh grade. That rape and manslaughter is something which occurs naturally when a group of people feels entitled to something which is owned by another ethnic group. What is happening in this time period is anything but natural, and what is truly horrifying is my all too sudden realization of how the land I love was only created by one of the most comprehensive campaigns of ethnic cleansing ever. As I stop for what seems like the first time in forever, I begin to think about Sandra Oh, Abel Tesfaye, Samantha Bee and Jim Carrey. I’ve never really known what I am, with mixed ancestry you don’t necessarily have the luxury of being able to point at one place on the map and say “That’s Me!”. I think I just resonated the most with Canada out of convenience, as it explained my light skin and my unhealthy obsession with maple syrup.

I’m pretty much just a caricature of a Canadian. Messed up teeth, check! Pleaser personality, check! Speech impediment that makes it sound like I have a weird accent, check!

I find myself grimacing as I unpack my survival kit in the bitter cold. I end up finding not only clothes, a box of tampons, a rope lighter, a trail and wildlife guide of Saskatchewan and a ‘survival blanket’ but what I might consider in this situation to be “luxury items” things like a medium-sized jar of coconut oil, a mirror and a notepad. As I flip through the trail guide, for the first time I feel pride bubbling up from deep inside my chest. I know where I am, and I know where I want to go, and I know that that in itself is half of the journey.

The smell of burning tobacco still lingers in the air, signaling to me that I’m not nearly as far away from the tribe as I thought I was. I eat half of my long-awaited protein bar and begin my little ‘northern excursion’. The year is 1858, the time where my Native ancestry was

traceable only to Saskatoon, Canada. In the wake of the rigid implementation of an act titled “The Gradual Civilizations Act Of Canada” my ancestors would immigrate to America, maintaining their Native bloodline until around the 1930s. That act would impose sanctions on professional relations between traders and Native American consumers, hindering the success of our original trade system. In the years to come it would also “encourage” Native men to assimilate to a Canadian lifestyle with hopes of gaining back the wealth and property they lost, only for them and their children to be subjected to violence and cruelty at the hands of the European settlers.

For many years these same Europeans have attempted to persuade the Indigenous peoples all over the world to forget about connecting to the natural world, with the goal of them giving into materialism. This ill-fated law was a source of much pain for my family, and as it seems right now the only way for me to “go back to where I came from” is to actively work against its formation. To say that I’ll singlehandedly dismantle the entire system which this form of government is built upon would be unrealistic to say the least, the very least, so instead of wandering aimlessly in a foreign climate I have decided on travelling East in hopes of finding other like-minded individuals who will help me. In the autumn of this year an assembly will be held in the by members of various branches of the Iroquois delegation to protest the Gradual Civilization Act. This specifically organized protest eventually encouraged the transfer of some government’s power to the Aborigines Protection Society, which allowed for a woman by the name of Catharine Nahnebahwequay to receive an audience with Queen Victoria, who eventually gave the people of the First Nations the opportunity to legally reclaim their own ancestral land. By my own logic if I were to meet Mrs. Nahnebahwequay then that would mean I would have actively changed history, meaning that I would be able to return home to my real family.

*Just a totally normal day in the life of your favourite “social-justice warrior”.*

Over the course of the last excruciating weeks I’ve had to do things I never thought I’d do, start my own fire, eat nothing but coconut oil for days at a time, catch a fish with a mirror, all bizzare things which I’ve done in the name of staying alive. The protest is in Alberton, Ontario and assuming I was in my family's native Saskatoon when I was rescued I’ve travelled over



2,000 miles already. My entire body aches from the constant exertion, and the gnawing emptiness inside of my chest is even worse. I miss my family, and being alone with my nothing but my thoughts has proven to be a struggle. It hasn't been all bad however, because without any distractions I've had plenty of time to think about what I'm going to say to Catharine when I (hopefully) get the chance to meet her. I've tried to balance my love and adoration for her with my crippling self-consciousness so I don't come across as too desperate, but if I don't play my cards right it is very unlikely I'll be given another opportunity to return home. My eyes well up at the thought of never again petting my cat or hugging my brother, and those few tears soon turn into a full-blown meltdown.

*Ahh, classic Colette.*

I allow myself to sink deeper and deeper into the snow, I feel my chapped lips contort into a grimace as I let out a loud sob. My breath hitches in my throat, and thinking now about my parents' unwavering faith in me, something which I'd always chosen to overlook, now acts as a reminder about how important my family has been to me in my times of distress. Whenever I was lacking motivation like I am now they always would tell me that with passion and determination anything could be accomplished. Acknowledging how difficult the final stretch of my journey has been allowed me to become more adamant about completing it. Looking forward now, I see footprints emerging from the previously unnoticed paths beside me. Now my heart is beating loud and fast in my chest, and I quickly stand up to follow the multiple sets of footprints. I run, summoning the last bits of strength from within me to follow the tracks for what feels like miles. My vision is blurry from the snow and ash in the air, until the moment where my eyes widen at the all too familiar smell of smoke.

*I feel nothing, because at this moment I am defined only by my pure, unadulterated anxiety. Something's going to happen, and I have no doubt that I am going to be caught right in the thick of it.*

At first glance all I see is a swirling cloud of white, but looking closer it becomes very apparent that what I'm looking at is an ornately decorated log cabin, the Onandaga Council House. Women, men and children are clamoring to enter the small building, but the thing I first notice is the Englishman and a woman, presumably his wife, angrily shoving their way through

the crowd of people to get inside. Catherine's husband was a Methodist preacher, and Catharine was considered by her close-knit group of family and friends to be an incredibly eloquent public speaker. Will she be delivering a speech at this summit? This would probably explain why the white man beside her just elbowed a small child in the face to have her enter the building before the others. Guys like Kevin Franklin from Kindred, Hamlet from Hamlet and even Michael Scott would feel right at home with William Sutton, the husband of Nahnebahwequay. According to what I've read about him he was a kindhearted preacher and an enthusiastic family man and father of eight children. It's unfortunate that nobody felt the need to document anything else about him, particularly his more negative traits, because the man I see in front of me and the guy who I've read about online are two entirely different people. He married her when she was fourteen as a way for her family to ensure her 'white-woman' status in the eyes of the Methodist church.

*Which explains so, so much about the dynamic between those two.*

I can see a small flask bulging from one of his pockets, and with one of his dirt-caked hands he begins to aggressively pull his wife to the front of the room by the strap of her shirt. That gross display of dominance, coupled with the smell of whiskey on his breath is making me sick to my stomach. I cautiously avoid any loose limbs as I weave my way deeper into the council house, attempting to follow them in. There's no room for personal space here, and my senses are overwhelmed with the smell of sweat, booze and ash and the chanting that's echoing loud in my ears. Catharine waltzes up to the podium, her long braid trailing behind her and I stand in my place absolutely dumbfounded. He eventually lets her go, and the tension between them instantly dissolves the second she opens her mouth to address the crowd in her native tongue. How should I get her attention in a way that is respectful and appropriate? If I were to just approach her in an ordinary way our interaction would have no significance, but if I'm too forward then I would risk being perceived as obnoxious or arrogant by one of my heroes. I have no plan of what I should do, until it hits me.

*Like a freight train.*

Throughout history, it was never women like Nahnebahwequay that were standing between me and my chance at freedom, but men like William Sutton. And so, with nothing to

guide me but a kindred instinct I rip a paper out of my previously unused notebook and scrawl down a quick note. My goal for my message is to be short but elaborate, random but purposeful and most of all have sentimental value which will stay with him after I've left.

My hands shake ferociously when I walk up to William Sutton and place the letter in his hands as to not interrupt Catharine as she gives her speech.

"What in the bloody- Hey you! Get back here!". I couldn't risk revealing my distinct accent or give him the opportunity to analyze my facial features, which is why I can't do anything but attempt to disappear within the crowd. Oddly enough he doesn't follow me, which is certainly a great relief. From afar I watch him finger the makeshift seal on the note I gave to him, and he pulls a paring knife out of his pocket to break it. His eyes leer over what was written for Nahnebahwequay, and I can barely stifle a giggle at the thought of him reading my words.

*"William Sutton is a swill-bellied blunderbuss."*

"The hell is this!" he shouts above the voices of the people beside him, "The mutton-headed fool who scripted this letter lest reveal themselves at once!". I'm not really shocked at the way he voiced his apparent displeasure with what I wrote, and I can barely exhibit enough restraint not to run right up to him and say

"Twas' I!" in my best British accent. His words are booming, and as the only male English speaker in the room it's almost as if, through his rage, he's indirectly reinforcing the stereotype that white men are aggressive and dangerous. I'm scared of him, the same way which my own ancestor probably was of me when she saw me towering above her in the tent not so long ago. The idea of him subverting the very concept which was used to minimize the violence that Aborigines have endured to victimize himself is the reason why I can't help but laugh out loud at his sudden outburst.

My laugh, a shaky mixture of fear, confusion and unfounded arrogance echoes loud in the silent room. His blue eyes single me out, and he immediately lunges forward and grabs me by my collar. Nobody does anything, nobody moves, nobody speaks and the world goes quiet for a few blessed seconds. I knew that right at this moment the only thing that is standing between me, my family and my future is a sixty year old drunkard with a small knife sitting in the back of his woolen caps waiting to be used. His second punch hurts just as badly as his first, and as he

continues to strike me again and again I turn my head to make eye contact with Nahnebahwequay. She's as still as a statue, her hand clasped firmly over her mouth with one single tear rolling down her cheek. I clench my jaw, and I notice my gaze becoming more distorted as her face blurs around the edges. My vision gives out long after the rest of my body does, allowing my senses to mellow and slowly fade away.

I open my eyes to see the all too familiar cream-colored walls of my Humanities classroom, allowing myself to breathe in the deeply pungent scent of pencil shavings and hormones. Frankly, I had never thought that I would ever find this sort of relief in the fact that I was in school. Ever. I look around, surprised nobody has commented on my bruised eye or the red handprint around my neck. Everything is as normal, guys are not-so-subtly playing video games on their cell phones, girls are chatting about who-knows-what and my teachers are clacking away at their keyboards. I'm glad it's a quiet day and everyone's keeping to themselves, because if I wasn't known for my "dramatic" eye makeup looks and wearing turtlenecks then I would've seemed pretty conspicuous among this crowd.

"Colette? I didn't even realize you were here!" one of my tablemates calls out.

"Yep, and I'm happy that I am!" I say a little too enthusiastically, and almost immediately after the words leave my lips I hear someone from across the room someone yell

"BETTT". All of the things I've previously taken for granite come crashing down on me, and I feel like a fool for not being able to see the beauty in the things I encounter everyday. Even little things, like the warm weather and a friendly smile are all things that seem so foreign after my recent exploit.

As pleased as I am with the fact I was able to trick William into showing his true colors with only a well-worded note so I could go home, I do regret not being able to forge a meaningful relationship with my unnamed ancestor. I can't help but think how disappointed my grandfather would have been with the underlying feeling of hostility between us. This thought lingers long after I've left campus and I've reunited with my family, and as I switch on my cell phone for my daily dose of CNN I see a text message notification from him. "Well speak of the devil" I say, grinning as I wait for the attached image to load.

“We think we remember our ancestors when in fact they are present in this moment... Not as others, but as our very selves. We all resonate as one being when we remember them and remember the truth about the conditional realm. I love you Colette. - Grandpa”

The image never did send, but at that point did it really matter? After years and years of searching, I’d finally realized that everything I ever needed to know about myself was right in that fateful tent somewhere in Saskatoon.

# Retourner

Adam Laulom

It was a normal Sunday morning for me, I took my shower, fed my dog, and was out of the house for my morning coffee. Every Sunday I meet my dad at a coffee shop called James Coffee to start off my day, it's a traditional routine and even when I was younger my dad and I would always go to James' on Sundays. We would stay there for hours, he would work and I would do cardistry or most often, read a book. I am twenty-two now and yet I am still doing it, but I like it, it calms me. The smell of the fresh coffee brewing, the air of relaxation that flows through the shop, it brings me back to my senses.

"Hey, son!" My dad appeared in front of me.

"Hey, Atticus." No, that's not my dad's actual name, it's a nickname I came up with when I was a kid, I got it from "To Kill a Mockingbird." My dad always reminded me of Atticus Finch from that book. Whenever I call him that nowadays it always puts a smile on his face, and that puts a smile on mine.

"Thanks for ordering my coffee already, son."

"No problem, dad. How's it going?" We talked for a little about work, sports, and some other things.

"What are you reading?"

"Well, I haven't actually started reading it yet, I found it in the attic last night and I don't really know what it's about, but I think it's a diary or something."

"That's cool, well you should start reading it today."

"Why do you think I brought it," I said in a humorous voice as he walked away to the bathroom. I opened up the book and took a look at it. It didn't have a title but on the first page it said "Diary of Leon Tzedek". Right when I opened it I started to feel a little out of it. I was feeling dizzy and nauseous when all the sudden, blackness.

I fell into a state of what felt to be hypnosis, but then all the sudden I was back. No, I was not back at James Coffee, I was in a house of some sort. I didn't know where the hell I was or what was going on.

“Hello!” Nobody answered. “Anyone there?” No answer once again. I looked around the house and found nobody and nothing. I walked to what seemed to be the kitchen and sat down at a table so I could think for a second. There was an overwhelmingly old style to the house and it made me feel uneasy. Where the hell could I possibly be? Where’s my dad? What even happened? Did I teleport somewhere? My mind was boggled with confusion, curiosity, and fear when all the sudden a boy appeared in front of me. Maybe not a boy. He was about 5’7 and had curly brown hair, blue eyes, and a knife in hand.

“Who are you why do you speak English?” the kid said with a suspicious, but fierce voice.

“My name is Adam. I speak English because I’m from the United States.”

“Why are you in my house?!” I noticed that the kid had tears in his eyes, I could tell something had happened.

“Look, kid, I mean no harm, I don't even know how I got here. One moment I was at a coffee shop, and the next I’m here. Are you okay kid?” The kid slowly walked closer to the table and sat down.

“The SS just invaded my neighborhood, they took my parents, all my belongings” he paused “they took my life.” I saw a tear roll down his face.

“I'm sorry about that, kid.” If I heard him right he said the “SS.” The SS was the Nazi soldiers from WW2 and they haven’t been around since the 40s. Have I gone back in time?

“You don't look like you're from around here, what's with your clothes?” He quickly brushed off the tears on his face. “You mind telling me the year it is, kid?”

“It’s 1940, why?” 1940, oh no.

“You're right, I’m not from around here, I'm from the year 2026.”

“That doesn't make sense, prove it.” I pulled out my phone and showed it to him, he slowly grabbed the device out of my hand. He examined it carefully with a look of perplexity on his face.

“What the hell is this?”

“It's called an iPhone. Its a device from my time period, do you believe me now?”

“I guess I have to now. Why are you here?”

“As I said before, one moment I was in a coffee shop and the next I was here. ”

“What’s your name, kid?”

“Leon, Leon Tzedeck.” Then I realized that the diary I had with me belonged to a “Leon Tzedeck,” That dairy must be part of the reason I'm here.

“I had your diary with me, Leon, I think that's part of the reason why-” All the sudden we heard a vague voice from the other room. Leon and I slowly and steadily walked towards the room. I kicked open the door and what I saw stunned me.

It was my dad.

“Dad?”

“Son!” We exchanged a hug and then I asked the question both me and Leon and I were thinking.

“How in the world did you get here?”

“Good question. So when I got out of the bathroom people were surrounded by our table, I pushed my way through and there was nothing there but your book sitting on the table,” my dad noticed Leon standing behind me and confusion struck his face, then he continued his story. “People told me that you were just casually sitting there and then all the sudden you started to fall through the floor... I didn't really believe them to be honest. I walked out of the shop and took your book with me and when I was walking to your car to see if maybe you were there. I opened that book you were reading. I read a page and started to feel a little dizzy, then all the sudden I was here somehow.”

“That’s pretty much what happened to me, too.” Leon had a look of confusion on his face.

“Wait, so you guys were reading my diary?” My dad and I nodded.

“That was your diary? By the way, I am his father, Brent.” My dad reaches out to shake Leon's hand.

“I’m Leon, and yes, that's my diary. I started writing it when my home country got defeated in the Battle of France by Nazi Germany.” Leon walked into a room across the hall and came back with a book in his hand. My dad and I examined it and surely it matched the one we had.



“So can anyone explain where we are?” My dad said with curiosity.

“This is my house. Well, it was my house until they took everything.” Leon’s expression of sadness quickly came back. I explained to my dad what happened to Leon. Leon added that we were in Paris, France. So what I knew, so far, is that we were in 1940 France and Nazis just invaded Leon's neighborhood. All this information was making my head hurt and I tried my best to stay calm. This is not a good place to be, especially because I'm Jewish. I noticed that Leon had the yellow star of David on his arm, which meant he was Jewish too. I remembered learning that all Jews in Paris at this time were forced to wear the star so the Germans knew which people were Jewish.

“So, Leon is there any other information we should know about where...” I started to feel dizzy once again and then, blackness.

I was back in the coffee shop, almost the same spot. A couple of seconds later my dad appeared too. We exchanged a look of consternation and then walked out of the shop. People were intensely staring at us when we appeared so we figured it was best to just leave.

“What just happened?”

“I don’t know, son. Meet at my house, we have to talk about this.”

I drove to the house and when I walked in, my dad was sitting at the table deep in thought. The diary was in his hands and he was examining it closely. I sat at the table and started off our conversation.

“That diary has to be the reason we went to that place.”

“It just doesn't make sense, Adam. How could this diary cause us to go back in time?”

“Yeah, I don't know and another thing I don't know is if we will be sent back again.” My dad said that when all those people were surrounding the table where I was sitting, they were examining and reading the book, yet nothing happened to them. How come we were the only ones affected by this diary? Do we have some sort of connection to Leon?

“You are right son, we don't know if we will be sent back again, and if we do we should be prepared. When I was sent back I was actually reading the diary. You didn't even read the diary yet you were still sent back, right?”

“Yea, I was just looking at it.” My dad and I came up with the conclusion that to be properly prepared if this happens again, we should construct a kit. It took hard work to get all the items we needed, but finally, we got them. Fake German identification for me, my dad and Leon; An English to German dictionary in case we need to know some German. We also thought it would be helpful to have some clothes from the 1940s, two KM200 knives for protection if needed, Reichsmarks (German currency that was used in the '40s), a 1940 map of France, playing cards, and lastly a picture of me and my dad for self-belonging.

About a week had passed before I was “sent back” again. It was football Sunday and I was at my dad's house for the games. I always go over to his house for the Sunday games. My dad and I had mostly forgotten about our incident with Leon, but just in case I still kept my bag containing all the kit items close to me. My dad kept the book so he could go back with me if needed. Just like the two other times, I started to feel dizzy and nauseous and the last thing I remember was my dad shaking me saying,

“Is it happening?!”

Next thing I know I was in the middle of a cobblestone street. Last time I was sent back to Leon’s house and he was there, where is he this time? It was dark and nobody was on the street. I noticed a dim lamp post in the distance and I slowly walked over to it. There was a newspaper on the ground directly under the lamp being illuminated by the light. On the front of the paper, it read July 16th, 1942. I recognized that date, I remember learning about it. This was the day of the “Vel’ d’Hiv Roundup.” Today is the day that 13,152 Jews are going to be rounded up by the French police on order from the Germans and sent to concentration camps. All the sudden, my dad appeared about 10 feet behind me with the book in his hands.

“Dad?”

“Son, Where’s Leon?!”

“I don't...” A person appeared about 100 yards away from us, running fast. He was yelling:

“They're coming, they're coming!” We ran with him until we finally came to a stop in front of a house.

“Leon, Leon Tzedek?” I could tell this was Leon, but he looked older. “Remember us? We met you when you were younger... right after your parents were taken away by the Nazis.” A look of sadness struck his face.

“Adam and Brent right?” We nodded. “Yea I remember... how could I forget you guys?” Leon explained the situation with the Nazis and what is going to happen. He told us there's not much time before they start rounding up people and said we have to come up with an idea before dawn. I showed Leon the kit that my dad and I put together. All the resources we had opened up the door for more choices of action. We finally came to the conclusion that the only way we will survive, is if we leave Paris and go to Spain. I knew that Spain was a neutral country and it would be way safer for Leon than Paris.

“I don't have anything that I'm leaving here, they already took my family. Using the fake German identification and the reichsmarks we can get on a train before dawn.” All the sudden I heard the loud crackles of a series gunshots in the distance. The shots echoed through the room. I could hear the loud boots of the Nazis clanging the ground, my heart was racing.

“They're coming, we have to go now!” Leon said intensely. He quickly packed his belongings and we were on our way. When we got to the train station Leon did all the talking, he said he learned a lot of German living under German control. Using our fake IDs and money we successfully got on the train. After a long train ride, we finally made it to Spain. As soon as I stepped off the train I started to feel it, dizzy and nauseous, then darkness. I was back in the house. My dad appeared ten seconds later and we exchanged a look of both fear and relief.

“We're never touching that diary again.”

# Survive The Plague

Troy Major

I set my time traveling device's date to June 1, 1950 and the place to San Diego, California. Just before I go, I check my bag to see that I have everything that I need to take back with me. I toss the time traveling device at my bed, but I miss and it hits the side of it. I wince as it loudly hits the floor. I inspect it. Every button is still in its same place. The small, black display has no visual defects. There are no missing parts anywhere, everything looks fine. I check my bag, hardtack, check, salted meat, check, a lighter, check, two lifestraws, check, a knife, check. I have everything I should need. I press the button to initiate the time traveling process. Everything goes dark, I can no longer see the painted walls of my room. When I regain my sight, everything around me is completely different. I'm in the middle of a forested area. I go to make my way out of it and there is a major red flag about where I am. It definitely does not look like 1950.

There are no telephone poles or street lamps, nothing electrical. The houses look completely different too, a lot more brick and nothing looks industrialized. Everything gives me a puzzling feeling. I look back at my time travel device and I am instantly brought back by it, it says 1350. There is no way I've ended up here. I smack the device and the number stays the same. When the device hit the ground, it must have really messed something up that I couldn't see on the outside. I know that I can go back to present time, but not for long. The time travel device uses an immense amount of power and I can only use it, fully, every couple of days. I have to wait for a cooldown period of a couple of days. One thing I can do is head back to present time and then get taken back to the time where I was, but I can only do this for a short amount of time. During that time, I'm not fully taken back to present time, but mostly. I am in a sort of limbo between one place and the other. I sure am glad that I read the user manual so I know how to troubleshoot any problems that I have. In the short amount of time, I can grab anything else that I might need to help me survive. I sit to think about what time I am in and remember something, the year is 1350. What happened in 1350 you may ask, the black plague

happened. A plague that killed roughly half of Europe, some of Asia, and a little bit of the middle east.

I check my time traveling device again to see exactly where I've traveled to. To my luck I am in Dublin, Ireland. The black plague went through Ireland right during 1350. I have to really think about what I would need to survive here. I sit down and think about what extra things I would need to get in order to ensure my survival. I don't want to bring too many things, I need to easily be able to carry all of my things. The two main things that come to mind are proper clothes and antibiotics. I want to make sure that I fit in with everyone around me and I also want to make sure I don't contract the plague. I make sure I'm ready to head back to present time, but only for a little bit. I see that I do have everything on me and press the return button on my time traveling device. Everything around me goes dark.

When I can see again, I am partially relieved that I'm actually where I wanted to go to. I know I'll only be in the present time for about an hour, so I get to moving. I grab my bike and head to the drug store near my house. I look at the different types of medication and antibiotics that they have. One thing that I notice is that they seem to be two types of antibiotics, bactericidal and bacteriostatic. I read each of the boxes of medication and I see that one prevents infection from bacteria and the other kills bacteria that is already there. I decide to get both just in case. After I check out I head off to all of the Goodwills in my area. I figure that I would have the best chance of finding clothes of that time period at a place like that. In the small amount of time that I have, I go to as many Goodwills and thrift shops in my area as I can. With what I can find at all those stores all I can put together is one outfit. My outfit consists of linen breeches, a linen shirt, and a wool tunic. I don't like what I have to wear, but I'll have to if I want to fit in. I'm a little bit lucky that I won't have to stay there for too long. It will only be a couple of days. As I'm on the way home, I realize that it has been an hour and everything around me starts to go dark.

I regain my sight once again and I see that I am back to the same place back in 1350. I know that I really have to think about my priorities while I'm here, one wrong decision could end up with me dead. If someone contracted the plague, they most likely died in 3-8 days. A very common side effect of the plague is gangrene. Gangrene is what happens when your body tissue

dies. It is caused by an infection or lost of blood circulation. I figure the first thing I should do is find a source of water; I don't want to get dehydrated. I know that I have a lifestraw so I don't have to care where the water comes from, the lifestraw is able to filter out anything in water that is 0.2 microns or larger. It doesn't take much looking around to find water, I just use a small stream. I look around to make sure nobody sees me use something completely foreign to the time. I don't need that much, I can get more later. I remember my antibiotics and take them now, better safe than sorry. Now I have to think about what my next move will be. I'll have to be here for a couple of days. Something that I will need, knowing that I will be here for a couple of days, would be shelter. Hopefully, I will be able to find a family that welcomes me in. I would have to have a backstory though. I can't just walk into someone's home and expect to be welcomed. I have to think of a story of where I came from that is simple, but convincing. I know that many people in this area are being affected by the plague and I can use that to my advantage. I can say that the rest of my family was all killed by the plague and I was the only one that survived, and all I want is somewhere to stay for a little bit. Hopefully, someone will believe that. It sounds convincing to me.

I see houses in the distance, but they don't look that far away. I set off in that direction through the wooded area that I am in and in not too long, I'm there. I knock on the door of the first house that I get to and explain my story. What I'm greeted by is not something I expected. The person at the door is speaking a language that I've never heard. When they heard me start to speak, they had a look of pure confusion on their face. Not soon after, they closed the door in my face. It's not something I thought would happen, I thought my story was pretty convincing. I step away from that house and set on my way to another house. The one thing that struck me about the person that answered was that it seemed that neither of us understood the other at all. I go to another house a little ways from the one I was at before. Right before I got up to the next house, it hits me. In this time period the majority of Ireland speaks Irish. Some people speak English, but I'll just have to get lucky that find people that do. I knock on the door of the second house and their response is much different from the first person. I explain my story again and they seem hesitant, but still let me into their home. By my stupid luck, the second house I go up to speaks

English. The English that they speak is different from what I speak, but we are able to understand each other.

The rest of that day I spend inside the house, going outside only once or twice. I don't want to interact with the family that much, so I just keep to myself. At night it is quiet, much quieter than what I'm used to. No lights, no cars, almost no noise with the exception of the other people in the house and rustling of trees. The setting is quite peaceful, quiet and calm, but I still have trouble falling asleep. It is a lot darker outside. I am yet to adapt to this environment and I probably won't during the time that I am there. The next day is pretty uneventful except for one thing. I overheard from one of the people in my house that several families living around us have been getting sick and eventually dying. It's scary to know that I'm so close to a disease that killed half of Europe and I'm at risk of getting infected myself. I know that I just have to be safe for two more days, then I'll be able to go home. I spend the rest of the day going outside and exploring, there is a lot to do in a place that I've never been to before.

The landscape is very rural because there isn't much urbanization. At night, something is off. Someone in the house keeps coughing, and it's no regular cough. It sounds deep and at some points wet. It can't be anything good. When I wake up and get ready to go back outside, what I see really unsettles me. I notice that, and especially around their fingertips, the skin is darkened and almost black. I remember that one of the symptoms of the black plague is gangrene. I can't be around this if I want to survive, but I need somewhere to stay. I'll have to take the antibiotics that I have and hope for the best. I can't do anything while the rest of the family is tending to the sick one. I sure am not getting any closer to them than I have to. I should make myself a good guest at least, so I decide to clean the upstairs area. After I'm done, I spend the rest of the day outside. At night I have to go inside. I would get too cold if I didn't. I go inside and they look even worse than before. All they can do is lay there, unable to do anything. When it is time to go to sleep, I make sure to position myself as far away from everyone else as possible. Maybe it will increase my chances of not getting infected.

When I wake up, I feel fatigued. I think to myself that this is really bad. I've contracted something that killed half of Europe. I nearly lose it thinking about all that could happen to me. Amidst all of my worrying, I remember about my antibiotics. I grabbed both kinds, bacteriostatic

and bactericidal. I only took the bacteriostatic stuff. If I take the bactericidal antibiotics it will kill all of the bacteria that is in me. It should completely get rid of all that is in my system. Another wave of relief comes over me when I realize that I can transport myself back to present time now.

The cooldown period has elapsed. I get ready and gather all of my things. I have everything and go outside. I make my way in the general direction of where I first appeared. I check once again that I have everything that I first brought with me. Everything is there. I make sure that there is nobody is around and prepare myself to go back to present time. I press the button on my device and hope to my best ability that I'm actually transported to present time and not something wildly different. Everything goes dark and when I regain my sight I see my room. Everything seems to be alright. This makes me both extremely relieved and happy at the same time. I look at my time traveling device and make a vow to never use it again, or at least not for a long while. I put it deep into my closet to be forgotten about and then lay on my bed.



# Ring Around The Rosie

Naomi Hernandez

The image of the rising sun reflecting off my mirror wakes me. My room is dimly lit by the orange glow of the sky. There's no need to go back to sleep, I'll be leaving for church before the sun fully rises anyway. The house is quiet, no one else is up yet. I take in the silence of the house, it's rare that I ever get these, especially when you have two sisters nagging you all the time. I've been told I don't have it as hard being a middle child as I would the oldest. "*There's less responsibility*" I would agree with that but, when you're the only one keeping the house from burning down, at the age of fourteen; I'd disagree. I glance out the window observing the clear sky. Maybe today we'll actually of some good weather. After all the rain we've been having down here everyone's been craving to just wear their spaghetti straps again, and short shorts that are too normal for today's society in San Diego, California.

I felt nauseous coming out of the shower, the water must have been too hot. Just as I was about to change I started getting heat flashes. There was pain it was in my head, my arms, and legs. My chest felt tight but heavy as if someone was sitting on me. I was being squeezed together into this tight space, but I was still in my room. I quickly scrambled to get some clothes on, leaving my hair as it was dripping water down my back. My legs shake as the pain grows stronger, until it was a struggle to just keep myself standing. The pain went from being bearable to excruciating in just seconds. The bed was only five feet from me but I could only make it two before I fell. It was everywhere, burning me up from the inside out, soaking body in sweat, but shivering from how cold I was. I opened my mouth to scream for help, laying in the fetal position, I couldn't come to make a noise. I shut my eyes, cradling myself, unaware of what is to come next. I lay there, as everything goes black.

A breeze of wind blows across my face bringing along a horrid smell with it, forcing my eyes open. I'm still lying on the floor but not in my room, the ground under me is cold and wet. I blink a couple times bringing my vision back to focus and discover I'm in a forest somewhere. Pine and Birch trees tower over me, full with green leaves covering the grey sky, this isn't San Diego. *Where am I? How did I get here? Why am I here? Am I dead? What's happening? Have I been kidnapped?* Thoughts run in and out of my head, the beat of my heart rising. Fear,

confusion, aggravation, affliction, discomfort, so many emotions going through me that I can't comprehend. The pounding of my heart rises up to my throat, I push myself up from the ground, flinching at the pain releasing from my body, throwing up as an instinct. I look up to take in the new world, Blackbirds swoop down from trees, as the winds blows through the hill of green grass. There are paths made into the ground leading off in the distance, the clicking of hooves grows louder behind me. I duck behind a tree as a carriage full of all sorts of supplies being pulled by horses passes. There must be people down there for that big of a load. I quickly follow behind the carriage keeping a good distance between us.

I can see a town growing in sight as I climb over a hill. Small shed like houses spread throughout what looks like five acres of land. There's nothing much to the town other than what looks like a combination of hay, dirt, and manure covering the streets. Very few people walk through the streets, and if so they all carry loads of bags with them. They all seemed to be fleeing from something. While those who looked as if the homeless lay helpless on the street, being rejected of the help they cried out for. The sight of this deserted, lifeless village gave me an unsettling ach in my stomach.

"Hello." I call out as I walk into the streets of the village. "Is anyone here." All the buildings are dark, empty, building up cobwebs. "Please, anyone" I cry out, my chest tightens up holding back tears. I need to know what was going on, I need to talk to someone. "Hello is anyone--," I hear a sharp voice call out behind me. I whip around to see an older woman staring at me. She too carries bags with her, as two young boys fallow behind her, but yet she doesn't seem to have a spouse with her.

"What do you think you're doing, child?" She looks back at forth at me and the town as she speaks.

"I - I need help, please." She flinches at my words, pulling up her gown that covers almost all of the skin on her body, over her mouth only leaving her deep blue eyes to be shown.

"Are you sick child!? If so, I can't help you, I'm sorry." She starts to back away, pulling along the children with her.

"Sick? What do you mean, 'sick'? No, no I'm fine, can you just help me?" I raise my voice angry in the fact that I still don't know what the hell is going on. The emotion changes in

her eyes looking at me in disgust. “Why are you running away, just like all the other people?” I ask.

“*Dumb Dora,*” She grimaces at me as she pulls down her gown from her face, looking at her. I can see the dark bags under her eyes, and the dirt that covers her face “What's your name, girl.” She commanded an answer, completely ignoring my question. She has a strong personality. I answer her question, afraid that she was the only person I'd be able to talk to, and not wanting her to leave me.

“My name is... uh-,” I hesitate, I don't know why but I felt that my name, Naomi Hernandez, wouldn't belong here, in whatever time period I was in.

“You don't know your name?!” I could tell she was on the verge of just walking away, by the way she was expressing her body language. Switching off weight from foot to foot, rolling her eyes at me. She could run at any second, but she didn't.

“Yes, I know my name. It's Edith. Edith Bennick.” I could tell by the ways the streets were long and narrow and how she was dressed I had to be in Europe, years ago, possibly Sweden. My mom's side of the family is very educated on where our family came from, and I've seen some old pictures of Sweden, where we came from. I also know that my great, great, great, great grandma's name was Edith Bennick. Probably a bad analogy, but it seemed to have her convinced.

“Now can you answer my question? What is going on here?” I heard the disrespect in my voice, but it was too late now.

“Who do you think you are, child?!” she screams in my face, spitting on me. “You better go wash out that mouth of yours before I whip you myself. You must be one idiot of a child to talk to an elder that way! You must be ill, like all the others! You'll suffer alone, and soon enough, die!” She shoots me one last look of disgust, then storms off dragging the children close behind her. Another gust of wind blows past me, intensifying the horrible smell. That's when I realized where I was. The people all running away, from a sickness. Covering themselves from head to toe leaving no skin to be shown, it was the Black Plague. I'd heard about the plague from school, the unknown sickness that spread through Europe, in the 1300s. People dying left and right; rotting alive until they were dead. It was all making sense, the smell wasn't just a bad

stench, it was people. People who were already dead or dying right now. They were all fleeing out of the town because of the fear of getting the sick themselves. Coming from 2019, we figured out how the plague was spread. It came from black rats, it their flees. I sprint for the hill, running as far away as possible from the village as I can, until I'm gasping for air. The world starts to spin, as tears stream down my face. One second I was home and the next I'm here, alone. If I can't survive this, i'm going to die. I drop to my knees holding my head in my hands, screaming out.

The sun was almost set, I had found a small patch floor in the forest, good enough to stay overnight in. I tried to make a shelter, which is just a couple of big tree branches tied together. The possibility of getting bit by a rat was clear in my mind, but anything helped, even this “shelter.” One thing I knew for sure though, I was not going to set one foot closer to that town than I already was, unless I had some kind of protection on. That's the next thing I need to add to my checklist, *long clothing* or anything to protect my skin from fleas. I mentally check off number three, *make shelter*. One and two weren't hard to do, *Get a good distance away from the town* and *make a fire*. I wasn't surprised when I made the fire pretty quickly. When I was younger I would always make my own little fires out of the sticks in my backyard. This sounds very pyromaniac of me but I swear I'm not. I close my eyes, once more mentally reading over the things again that I still need to do. I've always found it easier to have a checklist of what was needed to be done, it keeps you on top of things. *Find clean water, make or find food* if possible, create a weapon that will be handy to catch an animal to eat or ever kill any rats in my way. *Contemplate all possible ways of death* it is the black plague, and finally *find long clothing*. I know I will definitely be adding more in the near future. These are the essential things I can think of to possibly make it through the night, which is doubtful but I have to have some kind of hope or I'll be making it nowhere.

The sun has already set and my fire is still alive. “*This is actually happening*” I've had to repeat that sentence to myself all day, it's what got me through my stage of denial and my checklist. Other than finding food, I guess I'll have to do that tomorrow. I did find water, there was a well not to far out of the town, but it did require walking closer to it. I used the leftover leaves I had from my shelter and tied them around any showing skin. Not my first choice of

fashion I would have picked but better safe than sorry. While contemplating all possible ways of death, I've come to conclusion that at any giving moment I can die. I also can't just camp out in the middle of the forest expecting to get anywhere. The smell around here has gotten worse from the increasing amount of dead bodies too. I'd do anything to breath in the fesh scent of a flower.

"THAT'S IT!" I shout out to myself. Ring around the rosie, pocket full of posy! The song was about the plague, people carried flowers around with them to help drown out the smell of the bodies. A tear of joy rolls down my cheek, giving me hope that i'll be okay. I would stay put by the fire all night, but if finding these flowers really did help take away the smell that increases the pain in my chest with every breath I take, you'd be damned if I wasn't going to find them.

I add another layer of leaves on top of my old ones, not only for protection but for warmth. I carry my makeshift knife close by my side. I tried carving a point at the end of a stick, but it didn't turn out too well, seeing I had nothing to carve it with. I can only see so much in front of me, everything blends in with each other when it's pitch black outside. Though the sky is filled with more stars than I've ever seen in my whole life, its beautiful, keeps me at ease. I can see a faint glow in the distance, where the town is. It's gone quiet over there, the cries and screams have stopped for the night. The silence makes everything louder, I can hear every cricket on the ground and all the leaves rattling in the trees. I startle myself with my own footsteps thinking there is a rat nearby. I take in a deep breath piercing my chest but it isn't as bad as before. The smell has lifted up a little, it's more fresh, clean, I'm getting closer. I can see the faint color of purple flowing all throughout the ground, lavender. The smell so fresh and beautiful I lay down to cover my face in it. Breathing in I can feel my lungs lifting up without any pain. I almost forget for a moment on what is going on around me. I pick out two handfuls of the lavender tucking one under the collar of my shirt and the other in my pocket. I start making my way back with a smile spread across my face reaching my eyes. I would have never thought I would be this thankful to have the simple smell of fresh flowers. I can see my fire in the distance next to my makeshift shelter, it doesn't look too bad from a distance. I notice a couple small black figures moving around under the fire. Shit, I knew I should've put it out, the rats must have been attracted to the light and heat of the fire. I see a tree only a couple feet ahead that looks climbable, there is still the possibility of them climbing up the tree though. I pull myself up on a

brack, I can go up about 15 more feet before it would be unstable. I move slowly trying not to make any noise, pushing off branch after branch. Pushing of one more my foot slips. I slide down about 5 feet, scratching the whole front half of my body, wincing at the pain. It goes silent and I try to control my panting, the crawling of the rats have stopped. My hands sweat and I start to climb up at the tree as fast as I can. I look down to see the rats running along the floor, going up higher than I should have I step down on a branch cracking it. I look down as a rat make eye contact with me, as he dashing up the tree.

“AHHHHHH, HELP! HELP! ANYONE!” I scream louder than ever before hoping someone is around who can hear me. I hear the clawing of the rat getting closer and make a jump for it. I smack the floor hitting my head hard, I stumble up as a piercing ring grows in my ears. I run, run as fast as my legs will allow. “HELP! HELP!” I don't know what direction I'm going in but I can't see the lights of the town anymore. I gasp for air unaware of the burning sensation that is growing in my throat the faster I go. Suddenly I can see in the distance the floor doesn't look as level as usual. A RIVER, I can hear the rushing water hitting against the rocks, once I get close enough I jump in. The water hits me like a thousand sharp needles, I shoot up gasping for air. The freezing water pressing down on my chest making it nearly impossible to breath. I let myself flow along with the current of the river keeping an eye out for any more signs of a rat.

My lower body has gone numb, breathing has gotten harder. I don't know if I've been in here for five minutes or five hours. I crawl out of the river falling to the floor. I can see my fingers have gone blue, and my hair has a layer of frost resting on it. I start to rip off my clothes praying I don't die here of hypothermia. I can't see any sign of life around me, I'm alone now. I start to build a fire as quick as I can but it's nearly impossible. My fingers won't stop shaking as I rub one stick against another, finally getting a spark as a drop of water falls from my hair burning it out.

“No” I cry out, punching the floor. I'm not going to die like this, I'm going to find a way to get back home.

*You will get back home*

*You will get back home*

*You will get back home*

I repeat over and over to myself, twisting the stick between my palms faster moving downwards; splinters poke through my skin over all my blisters. Smoke comes off the sticks I breathe onto it bringing it to life. I quickly add more sticks and leaves watching it grow bigger. I lay down next to it crying myself to sleep with the beautiful comfort of heat flowing on my face.

I wake up with the sun shining down on me. My fingers leave no sign of being blue, letting out a sigh in relief. There is a pile of what looks like new clothes next to me, with my old clothes next to them. There is a bag full of what looks like supplies for survival laying on the other side of the fire. I scramble to my feet throwing on my clothes, confused about what is happening. I walk over to the bag examining all the stuff in it, there isn't much but it's enough to keep yourself alive. Maybe I didn't realize these bags were here last night unless someone else found me here. I hear the crunch of leaves behind me, I quickly grab a knife out of the pocket of the bag.

"Whos there? I've got a knife." I clench onto the grip of it pointing it out ready to attack. I see a figure coming closer to me from behind some trees, taller than me but thin, a girl. As she comes closer I can see she's carrying what looks like a dead rabbit, she stops about 10 feet from me.

"It's ok, I'm not sick I just wanted to help." Her voice is soft, she blows a strand of her long brown hair out of her face.

"Who are you, what do you want." She smiles at me and walks over to the now burnt out fire.

"I'm Ebba Erickson, 16 years of age, I lived down in Stockholm but left because it got too bad down there." She speaks as she re-makes the fire. Her parents must be dead because there is no sign of them being around.

"What do you want from me?" I ask again

"Nothing, I found you out here last night and thought maybe you needed my help, and I could use yours. I see you haven't put on the clothes I laid out, they will cover up your skin." I look down at the clothes seeing it's a long-sleeved dresses, the same one she's wearing just in black instead of dark brown. I throw it on not because she told me, but for my own safety.

“How can I know you're not going to kill me or something.” She stands up to be at eye level with me.

“You can trust me, I know what it's like. I can tell you have no one, my family has died, I'm also on my own. So even if I was going to kill you or “something” I wouldn't even have anyone to share you with.” Grinning she says that last part looking deep into my eyes, sending chills down my spine. The tension in the air must be obvious because she then laughs to lighten up the mood. I know what she means to be alone. I don't exactly think my parents are dead like hers, but I also don't know if i'll ever see them again. “What's your name?” Ebba asks as she continues to work around the fire.

“My name Is Edith Bennick” telling her my fake name.

“Then I shall formally introduce myself, Edith. Hello, it is my pleasure to meet you, I'm Ebba.” she holds out a hand.

“Pleasure to meet you too, I'm Edith.” I hold mine out and we shake hands. I don't ask any more questions about how or when she got here. It's nice having someone around to talk to and keep company, plus Ebba doesn't seem to bad.

Four days have passed by, we've settled in pretty well. I've been doing a lot of the hunting, getting the hang of it. Ebbas taught me some good survival tips. I wouldn't mind staying in our makeshift camp we built longer, but we plan of leaving today. We don't know how far the plague has spread, so staying here wouldn't be safe. Ebbas has gone for her walk she takes every morning, checking the area. I stay back and pack up the stuff. Catching me off guard I hear laughter coming from the trees

“Back so soon” I call out to Ebba putting out the fire. I the laughter stops and it goes silent. I swing back launching myself to my feet. “Ebba, are you ok?” I call out for her but in a whisper afraid of what's out there. The once laughter turns into talking, deep voices. I can see four older men walking out from the trees, I scramble to grab the stuff. They must have heard me, I have to get sways. I don't know what they want but it scares me to think of what they can do to me in they find me.



“Well look at this boys.” The tallest of the men call out, all of them responding and an *oohs* or *awes*. “Looks like we got us some company” they creep closer to me, pulling carts full of food and supplies behind them

“I don’t want any harm, you can take my stuff and I’ll be on my way.” I plead hoping I can get away from them without any trouble.

“Awe, now where's the fun in that?” The tallest responds again, he must be the leader of their little group. “Go on boys” he jerks his head in my direction as they proceed to grab all my stuff.

“Stop, please!” I scream hoping Ebba is close enough to hear me.

“She wants to play.” The third one comes to me, he smells of B.O. Saliva drips out of his mouth into his bushy beard laughing in joy. He grabs my arm and shoves me into the group. Getting on top of me, grabbing my face in his hands leaning in. “Now, let's not make a big fuss about this” his hot breath blows down on my face, almost as bad as the smell of the rotting dead people. He slaps me hard across the face. I shove my finger down his eyes, doing exactly what my dad taught me for a situation like this. I shove him off of me as soon as he is weak from the pain, jumping up I kick him as hard as I possibly can in the balls. He cries out and I make a run for it.

“Don’t let her leave!” The lead man calls out to the second guy. He chases after me with impeccably fast speed. Catching up to me in three strides he grabs me by the hair. I scream as my head flings back, pounds from all of force. I can see a handful of my brown curls in his hand as he turns me to face him. Grabbing me by the neck dragging me over to the rest of them.

“What should we do to her boss?” He asks eagerly, wanting to beat me up.

“Let’s make her pay for the trouble she made us go through.” All four of them circle around me

“No! No, no no” I scream out bloody murder, tears streaming down my face. I fall down to the ground as number three kicks me hard in the gut. I cry out clenching my stomach, they all take turns. The pain evolving with every kick. I grab the side of my head crying, pulling on my hair. I just want to go home. I’m scared, I want my mom, my dad, the nagging of my sisters. My

vision goes black as I take once more kick to the back. I hear them walk away laughing, my body numb from all the pain unknowing of the damage done to me. I black out.

It's peaceful, quiet. My body free, floating, gliding through the sky. Stars circle around me, all different colors and sizes. Shooting stars flashing past my eyes, and bright planets drifting off in the distance. I hear a low rumble in the distance growing louder as the stars start to fade away. My lungs burn, shutting down. I look up and see the bright glow of the moon drifting away the farther I fall. I push and kick up as my lungs scream for air. I shoot up gasping, as my vision comes into focus. The sky is still dark as I float down a river, my body shaking tremendously. I struggle to the shoreline, pulling half of my body out of the water. I'm back in my clothes from when I first got here. Blood is streaming down the side of my face from when I jumped out of the tree my first night here. I pull the rest of my body out of the water collapsing on the floor. I can't feel anything but pain, my heart races looking for an explanation. I can see the smallest glimpse of the towns lights, where I was days ago. Wheres Ebba, our stuff, the new clothes I got. It can't be, I don't want to believe it, none of it happened. What have I done? I've imagined a whole new story when this whole fucking time I've been in the river. The same river I jumped into when I was running from the rats. I cry out disappointed with myself, I'm still alone, nothing happened.

"WHY!" I cry out, using up all of my air. Gasping for another breath. I look down at my legs to see they are turning black when I see something clutched onto my leg. I focus on the small black figure looking into its eyes, A RAT. I scream and kick flinging it off of me crawling away as fast as I can. Making it no more than three feet before I collapse. I look down to where the rat was, there are claw marks running up and down my entire leg, as tiny dots are scattered every here and there. Bite marks. I've been bit, I can just feel it disgusting disease flowing through my bloodstream, all throughout my body. My heart pounding in my chest blocking out the noise of my boisterous sobs. I push my face into the dirt shutting my eyes thinking of anything but this moment. As my vision goes black I lay there in alone.

A small glow of light comes from outside turning my eyelids into a glowing red. I open my eyes looking at the light above my head. It smells different. I know this smell. I look around me focusing on a bed, my bed with my pillows on it. I rub my hand over the fabric on the floor, a

rug, my rug. I'm home, in my room. The sun shines through my window hitting my face just like it did the morning before all of this. A tear slides down my face, I feel safe, finally free, joy flows through my body. I lie on my floor still soaking wet, struggling to take every breath, reminding me that this wasn't a dream. It really did happen. But as my vision starts to blur I don't feel sad, after all of this all I wanted was to make it back home, and I did. I take in one last breath knowing there won't be any more to come, letting my head fall limp on the ground. I look at my room for the last time, embracing it all when something I don't recognize comes to sight. A small black figure crawls on the floor dragging along its long tail on the floor. It crawls closer to my face as my vision goes too blurry for me to make out what it is. Light pours down all over my face, swallowing me whole, lifting me up. It takes all the pain away, and dries up the tears on my checks, I close my eyes releasing my last breath of air.



## Dedications

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## Story Summary

As the authors of these incredible short stories encounter various life changing events, you too will be immersed into their adventures. Follow each narrative to places all around the world, and learn about the events which helped shape our global identity. Discover the steps that were taken by the people determined to survive them. Cross through fields of lavender to escape the incurable disease that ravaged both Sweden and Ireland. Escape the tyranny of the Nazis throughout the brick jungle that is domesticated France. Meet the victims of cultural assimilation as we trek through the treacherous snow banks of Canada. Discover the crimes which were perpetrated by the church during the Spanish inquisition. Flee the iron grasp of the Communist Republic of China and slip through the cracks of time to avoid capture from Japanese troops. Find your place in the past of Salem and attempt to evade the ever tightening noose of society. Your history is waiting.

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“WOW! What a collection.”

☆☆☆☆☆

- Dr. Samantha Carrick

“I don’t know what's going on, but I support you wholeheartedly.”

☆☆☆☆☆

- Jeremy Farson

“Everyone of these historical adventures envelop you into each of their unique and gripping perspectives. You won’t want to come back to the present!”

☆☆☆☆☆

- Reiko Anderson

“Love these stories! When can I meet Winston?”

☆☆☆☆☆

- Naomi Hernandez